

A Walkin', Talkin', Breathin' Ball of Fire by ej_writer

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Summary:

Season one AU where Billy moves to Hawkins a year early. It's him, Steve and Tommy who get caught up in the conspiracy instead.

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Summary for the Chapter:

The boys pick Billy up at home. A little bit of drunken recklessness ensues.

It was 11 o'clock on a Monday, and Billy was grounded.

They had fucking *just* got here in this new town a month ago, and his step sister had already decided to start sneaking off with her merry band of nerds. Now *he* was facing the fallout for it, because he was supposed to watch her and some local kid had gone missing last night, probably not even an hour after Max had climbed back through her window to a stern step-father waiting up for her.

A lock was put on the outside of both his and his step sister's doors and windows, though he knew Max's were only temporary, and he was given a nice new collection of bruises down his arms and up his ribs.

It hadn't even been a full 30 days since they left San Francisco and he was already so done with this place. His asshole dad had moved them to the rural Midwest an entire *year* early, and now that his sister was being a brat and screwing everything up for him, it was going to drive him crazy.

With the locks in place he was stuck in his room with nothing to do but be miserable thinking about all of his problems.

There was a pill bottle on his nightstand, some prescription he'd gotten ages ago that he gets Susan to refill for him with a lie and smile, though he doesn't even know what it was for anymore. He had already taken a handful of them, and now he was laying on his bed with one hand up his shirt, the world spinning around him.

Closing his eyes against the head rush, he startles after an amount of time he can't even begin to guess how long from a knock on the window beside his bed. He sits up on his knees, blinking away floaters in his eyes so he could squint into the darkness to see his

friends, Tommy trying to push the window open while Steve stood off to the side, hands shoved in his jacket pockets.

Tommy smiles when he notices him, and signals for him to open the window, but he couldn't even if he wanted to because the the lock was on the outside. Billy shakes his head, and it's clear that Tommy was offended until Steve scoffs at him and says something Billy can't hear through the glass, handing him a bobby pin, like when expected to have to break him out.

By the time they'd fumbled with the lock enough that it opened, Billy had gotten ready again, pulling on his chunky boots and his old leather jacket, and putting his earring back in before grabbing the bottle of whiskey he kept under his bed, in case of scenarios like this.

He climbs out of the window and stumbles a little in the dewey grass, the pills he took still messing with his head enough that the drop was just a little too high, and let Tommy pull him along to Steve's car.

"Figured you could use some fun, Billy Boy." Tommy remarked with a raise of his eyebrows as he shoved him down into the passenger's seat, snatching the bottle to take to the back for himself.

They knew about his dad, it was next to impossible to keep it a secret when they were constantly sneaking him out of the house, but they promised not to tell anyone as long as he kept hanging out with them for cool points and supplying them booze. Which, you know, wasn't exactly the fairest of deals, and quite frankly, it got exhausting, being friends with them.

Because for the top dogs of Hawkins High, they were all talk, Tommy acting as their muzzled guard dog while Steve was just, well, he was nothing more than a brat. Billy's sure they wouldn't've lasted more than five minutes around his friends from California, but they still know how to give him a hell of a rush, so he'd deal with the high-school bully bullshit until he could find a better way to get his kicks.

Besides, a month ago he was new in town and friendless, and now he was sitting pretty at the top, maybe with a couple of posers, but he still figures he should be at least a little grateful to be among their

ranks.

The best guess he's got as to the reason why that is even though they make for polar opposites and don't get along too well is that they flocked together because they were all kinds of fucked up. Different kinds of fucked up albeit, but still in about the same boat.

Steve was their face, the one who hid behind his money for the popularity and played house with all his little girlfriends because his real family was never around.

Tommy was the muscle, the one who had no place in their social circle without mooching off of moneybags Harrington. Not an ounce of originality or free will in that boy, he was a follower, a do whatever you asked him to type because he could never get that approval anywhere else.

Billy didn't have his role yet, but he fell somewhere between the two, a nice piece of ass and an even better fighter than Hawkins had seen in a while, with the extra flair of that out-of-state charm. Everything they doted on him for was what got his ass beat at home. His looks, his attitude, his showing off, all easy targets for the student body looking for a thrill, and even easier for his old man to pull him apart with.

The drinking and the drugs and the sneaking out in the middle of the night was just to cover up who they were underneath, and he *hated* that about his friends. Every second he spent hanging out with them forced him to be introspective and evaluate his own life choices, and it pisses him off.

So instead of actually thinking about that, the fact that he knew Steve was only here because he was depressingly lonely in his mansion all by himself and Tommy only because his girlfriend didn't like him anymore and his mom was a supreme asshole, he lets himself get driven off into the middle of nowhere, where all the cracked as hell, barely paved roads in Hawkins led to.

They were all three schnocked before the next hour was up, a seemingly endless supply of the disgusting cheap beer Tommy stole from the convenience store tucked under the seats and Billy's

whiskey flushing their cheeks and making their heads fuzzy.

After they're out of town, past the county line where they don't know which township police to send after you, an unbuckled Tommy leans forward almost all the way between the front seats, a hand of each of their shoulders, and turns to Billy.

"Bet ya can't beat my record for how many street signs you can hit." He crushes an empty beer can against the back of the headrest on Steve's seat, and hands it to Billy. "Each one's worth a point."

Rolling down his window and giving Tommy a look that said something like accepting his challenge, his tongue poking out between his teeth in that signature Billy confidence, he tells him, "You're on, douchebag."

Steve takes that as his cue to speed up, not that they weren't already speeding, but there wouldn't really be much of a challenge if the bimmer wasn't going at least 80, except for maybe the drugs mixing in Billy's system, but still, Steve had plenty of speeding tickets under his belt already and ample allowance to pay for them, one more wouldn't hurt anything.

Billy's still using the window to push himself up out of the car, still getting the right footing so he doesn't fall out, when they pass the first sign, so he's not ready. Making sure his grip on the top of the car is good and solid, he waits before he throws the can at the next one, a sharp turn sign, hitting it smack dab in the middle. Tommy cheers him on, crushing and handing him another can, this one Steve's, and starting on chugging another.

Billy hits the next two on the corners, having to duck one on the rebound, but he misses the fourth, blaming it on Steve for going around the bend too fast and throwing him off his game before even considering that *maybe* he was just too drunk.

As they approach the next one, a deer crossing sign with a few dents already in it, Billy leans further and further out the window, determined not to miss again.

His elbow buckles and his hand slips, his balance faltering bad, and

there's a moment where they're all three thinking he's about to face plant on the road pushing 90, but Steve grabs him by the back of his jacket and pulls him back down into his seat *hard*, probably seconds before he broke his neck.

Tommy groans, "Awww, don't be a buzzkill Stevie." but neither of the boys in the front hear him.

Because Billy's seething, and definitely going to say something nasty before Steve cuts him off. "What is your damage, Hargrove!" He was too drunk and pissed off and just a little scared to care about watching the road, looking over at Billy for a few seconds longer than he should. "You could've gotten yourself killed!"

Billy looks over at him lazily, despite the rage burning in his eyes and churning in his gut, and shrugs his shoulders casually. "Isn't that the point of living recklessly?"

That earned a laugh and a whoop from Tommy in the backseat as he cracks open another beer, but Steve just scoffs at him and turns his eyes back to the road. Billy doesn't stop glaring at him, even though he'd dropped it, he'd still pissed him off, and suddenly there was enough tension in the car that his buzz was dead.

Once he was satisfied with how long he'd made Steve uncomfortable, Billy toyed with him some more, turning to Tommy in the backseat, a nasty grin on his face. "Could've taken ya if our pretty boy wasn't such a pussy."

Even drunk as a skunk he can tell that's nothing more than a jab at Steve, so he leans way back in his seat, hoping the leather will swallow him up, and mumbles a response nobody heard, something like, "My record was only like, two anyways."

But Steve didn't lay down and take his shit like Tommy did, he rolled his eyes and said, "Hey shut up, asshole. Maybe next time I'll just let you off yourself."

"Aw, ya really should. Make things easier for all of us, and I bet it'd look *great* on your perfect record too, king." It didn't have the effect Billy was hoping it would, he'd been *trying* to be difficult like he

knew bothered Steve, turn the brat act back around on him and argue with him like a child, but then the other boy looks at him with big eyes, all concern and no malice.

“You don’t mean that.” He sounds so genuine, it makes Billy regret not saying something else. If these assholes weren’t the closest thing he had to friends he could’ve, and would’ve, said a million and one things that packed a meaner punch, but him and his stupid big mouth and his soft spot for them had gotten him in trouble again.

“No, I don’t.” His tone almost makes up for the slip up, almost, but in all truth he had. Meant it that is.

With all the shit he had going on, with his dad and with Max and with even being in the bum fuck nowhere Indiana in the first place, he couldn’t help but think maybe he did want to break his neck on a street sign. There was a reason he’d willing hung out the window high and drunk.

But he had a reputation to uphold, the tough guy who didn’t take any shit from any one, of the group or otherwise. He had to make up for that little glimpse he’d given of his true feelings, even with Steve making those puppy eyes at him. “Cut it out with the melodrama, would you? Tryin’ to enjoy my high in peace.”

There’s a stretch of silence while Steve tries to think of something to say, Billy almost mocks him, asks if he even knew what the word melodrama meant, but he bit his tongue, and Steve ended up just grumbling. “Whatever man, it’s your funeral.”

The vibe was now officially dead, and Tommy was probably only about two seconds away from passing out in the backseat, so Steve just did a u-ey and drove them back home. Nobody said a word, the sounds of Scorpions filling the silence and only making things more awkward.

They roll up to Cherry first, it’s closer to the edge of town than Maple or Loch Nora, stopping a couple of houses down from Billy’s. Before he gets out he turns to Tommy, specially avoiding looking at Steve, to ask him, “Lock me back in?”

He nods, and Billy gets out and opens the door for him, catching him with a little “Woah there, birdie.” when he almost trips over his own two feet getting he. All the way back to the window he lets him keep his arm linked through his to hold himself upright.

When Billy, with only a little bit of struggle, climbs back into his room through the window, Steve watches Tommy lean into it and say something that made the both of them laugh, and he feels his chest tighten. He looks down at the steering wheel and ignores it.

The first thing Tommy says when stumbles his way back to the car is, “You know you didn’t have to be such a dick, man.”

Steve just looks past him trying to fumble with his seatbelt, nodding towards Billy’s window while he started the car back up. “I was just tryin’ to look out for him, Tom.”

“Yeah,” Tommy agreed wistfully, looking back too. Just before Steve pulls away from the curb he hears him sigh and mumble, “Somebody’s got to.”